

Proposed Minutes
Friend of the Court Bureau
Advisory Committee Meeting
State Court Administrative Office - Lansing, MI
Thursday, July 10, 2003

MEMBERS PRESENT: Hon. Mabel Mayfield, Murray Davis, Patti Holden, Nadine Klein, Mike Keeler, Lynn Ann Bullard, Dr. Bill Brooks, and Anthony Paruk

MEMBERS ABSENT: Nadine Klein, Linda Cunningham, and Gail Schneider-Negrinelli

STAFF PRESENT: Bill Bartels and Darla Brandon

PUBLIC ATTENDANCE: Dan Diebolt

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Brooks at 9:50 a.m.

2. ROUTINE BUSINESS

a. Approval of the April 10, 2003 Minutes

A motion was made by Judge Mayfield to approve the April 10, 2003 meeting minutes as submitted. Ms. Holden seconded the motion. **Motion passed unanimously.**

b. Correspondence - None.

c. Public Comment - Mr. Dan Diebolt addressed the committee with respect to requirements of mediators and evaluators in the friend of the court. He discussed the functioning and non functioning of the CACs in various counties, and how the public is unaware that the CACs exist.

Mr. Bartels will check into the Friend of the Court Section 19 with regards to the licensing of mediators and evaluators.

d. Subcommittee Reports - The Subcommittee has not met, so there are no additional reports.

e. Legislative Update

i. Information Only - Mr. Capps provided the subcommittee with a handout of the bills that have passed the House that affect the friend of the court.

f. Bureau Update

i. Joe Salamone - Mr. Bartels informed the committee that Mr. Salamone, the former Oakland County Friend of the Court has joined the friend of the court bureau as an analyst. He is part-time helping out with the non-custodial parent work first program and other areas in policy and procedures.

ii. Policy and FAQ - The committee was provided a handout of a policy and a FAQ. With MiCSES going into a number of counties, one change that is being made is the transition to nearly every payment being handled by the Michigan State Disbursement Unit (MiSDU). In order to help effectuate the change, the SCAO issued an administrative memorandum in May, 2003-4 which relates to bank accounts in processing payment and since MiCSES cannot handle interstate and any payments that are outside of the normal federal distribution. For instance, if the court orders a lump sum to be paid, the MiSDU is unable to split that out, but the intent is, that once the MiSDU is up and running, the FOCs will not maintain any bank accounts.

With respect to the FAQ, based on the number of questions from the Administrative Memorandum, this clarified where the questions were coming in, and responding to those questions. It is a more streamlined process as a follow-up to the administrative memorandum. This is directed at the policy level to the FOCs and courts, not to the general public.

iii. New Support Distribution Publication - The bureau updated the publication, clarifying to the public how child support distribution should work. This is available on the friend of the court bureau website at <http://www.courts.mi.gov/scao/services/focb>.

iv. Websites - Mr. Bartels informed the committee that there have been several webpage's added to the Supreme Court Website. These include: The Child Support Formula Subcommittee meetings, the Advisory Committee meetings, updated bylaws, public comment form, meeting dates and times, and the contact information and parking directions.

The Child Support Formula Manual's proposed changes are included as a link, as well as a copy of the current formula manual, the 2003 update replacement pages, support schedules, and the computer software download. The eleven proposed changes to the Manual and how to file comment on that section is also provided. The Policy Studies Inc. (PSI) study is also available as a link for review.

The notice on the web page states the meetings start at 10:00 a.m. This will be amended to show the accurate start time of 9:30 a.m.

Mr. Davis made a recommendation to send out a press release announcing that this information is available on the web. Ms. Holden seconded the motion. **Motion passed unanimously.**

3. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a. Customer Service - Mr. Bartels informed the committee that from February through early May, the Bureau received roughly 422 complaints through the Governor or Attorney General's office or various legislative offices. The complaints that were referred from outside of the system, 54% were from custodial parents, and 27% were non-custodial parents. Of the contacts that the Bureau received directly, 43% were custodial and 39% were non-custodial. Of the 127 grievances that had been filed against the FOC the Bureau received copies of, 43% were custodial and 46% were from non-custodial parents. Of all the grievances, 22% of the grievances were not an FOC issue. The biggest category across the board was support enforcement. Either the FOC was too harsh, or was not doing enough support enforcement.

Mr. Wright addressed the committee and thanked the committee for their time and devotion to the child support program. The Bureau is trying to identify the nature of dissatisfaction that is expressed by friend of the court customers, and take the appropriate corrective measures.

Mr. Wright informed the committee that the state has gone through four stages of the final conversion, and the expected completion date is September 30, 2003.

Ms. Bullard commented that as the Bureau begins to look at the customer service issues, there are three items that she believes cannot be looked at. Those are: staffing notice based upon a large number of cases per caseworker, funding for FOC staff, and the last is the centralization issue. These all will affect what the FOC staff is capable of providing with respect to good customer service.

Mr. Wright replied that the first solution to try to free up the time of FOC staff is automation.

In lieu of the comments that were made regarding CACs, Mr. Davis made a motion that would result in a memorandum from the FOCB, SCAO, and the Chief Justice to the legislature and Governor regarding finding a way to encourage and support the county government's to establish CACs. In doing so, convey the desire to explore the ways to formulate CACs for every judicial court or county. **Discussion:** Mr. Paruk commented that as being a member of the Livingston county CAC, and having discussions with other active CACs, in making this motion, without some type of state money to fund this, there may not be many counties that will participate in it. Dr. Brooks commented that at the county board

of commissioner's level who appoints the CACs don't have the vested value, interest and awareness as other entities may have. The motion was altered to convey the desire, and let the Chief Justice decide how to proceed from that point of view. Mr. Paruk pointed out that more than 50% of the times, many CACs don't have a quorum, so they are unable to meet. This topic will be tabled for the next meeting.

Access & Visitation Grants - Mr. Cole, a management analyst in the FOCB provided a brief history of the A&V Grants. The federal office of child support was put in charge to award grants to the states for parenting time programs. In Michigan, the money goes to the federal office of child support to the FIA, Office of Child Support, and the FOCB is in charge of administering the grant funds. Last year \$281,000 was awarded to fourteen counties. The 2004 application instructions and application will go out July 11, 2003. Some of the requirements to receive a grant, is the FOC has to provide 10% of their funding, submit a budget proposal and a brief description of the program. The bureau has applied for \$312,971.00 for FY 2004. The grants are due August 15, 2003.

b. Committee Bylaws - final – tabled for the next meeting.

c. Child Support Formula

i. 2004 Update Status – Mr. Bartels updated the committee and reported that the Supreme Court still has the matter under consideration. The Court held an administrative public hearing on June 19, and to date has received over 250 individual comments. Mr. Bartels said a final report summarizing the public comments would be submitted to the Justices in the next several weeks.

ii. Subcommittee Status - The Subcommittee is currently not meeting.

iii. Old Recommendations on Low Income Section and Imputation Section Changes – tabled for the next meeting.

d. Grievance Form – tabled for the next meeting.

e. Public Comment Procedures – tabled for the next meeting.

4. NEW BUSINESS

a. WITS, Workgroups, and PLG (collaboration with OCS) - Mr. Bartels provided the committee with a brief update and handout of the various workgroups that have been formed that the FOCB analysts are participating in with OCS.

- b. Dealing with Arrears – California Study see executive summary pages 15-23 – The Committee can review this information at:
<http://www.childsup.cahwnet.gov/pub/reports/2003/2003-05collectbility.pdf> .

5. CLOSING

- a. Members Closing Comments – None.
- b. Final Public Comment – None.
- c. Next Meeting Date – October 9, 2003
- d. Adjourn - The meeting was adjourned at 2:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Darla Brandon
Trial Court Services